

Encounters and Questions: An Archaeologist from a Trans-Modern Society

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ABSTRACT

The undeveloped world indigenous archaeologist is absolutely *the other* in his/her own country; such a condition is a result of a long term process, the process of post industrial revolution in the developed countries which changed the universal actions and reactions towards the undeveloped one. An archaeologist in the undeveloped world is the other because his/her discipline is an imported unindigenous one. His/her context is more problematic and he/she is usually an adherent of his/her western discipline pioneers. As will be narrated below, an indigenous archaeologist has to censor himself/herself and distance from their native context, while there is no place in the developed world for them as that is naturally another world. Their education in an undeveloped country has made them apply methods and adopt approaches which are mostly defined by the propaganda and the regional policies of governments based on nationalism. However, archaeology needs anthropological humanistic principles in order to be effective in a world scale. Four social encounters with an indigenous archaeologist have been narrated in this article; in his own society, in a developed country and in a postcolonial context. These narrations depict the status, the individuality and the contextual conditions of an archaeologist's.

Résumé: L'archéologue indigène du monde non-développé est un étranger absolu dans son propre pays; cette condition est le résultat d'un processus à long terme, le processus de révolution post-industrielle dans les pays développés qui a changé les actions et les réactions universelles vis-à-vis des pays non-développés. Un archéologue dans le monde non-développé est l'autre parce que sa discipline est importée et non-indigène. Son contexte est plus problématique et il/elle suit généralement la ligne tracée par les pionniers occidentaux de sa discipline. Comme il sera décrit ci-dessous, un archéologue indigène doit s'auto-censurer et

In memory of late Prof. Farhang Khademi Nadooshan.

se distancer de son contexte d'origine, alors même qu'il n'y a pas de place pour lui/elle dans le monde développé, puisqu'il s'agit là naturellement d'un autre monde. Son éducation dans un pays non-développé l'a conduit/e à appliquer des méthodes et adopter des approches qui, pour l'essentiel, ont été définies par la propagande et les politiques régionales de gouvernements fondés sur le nationalisme. Cependant, l'archéologie a besoin de principes anthropologiques humanistiques pour être efficace à l'échelle mondiale. Cet article relate quatre rencontres sociales avec un archéologue indigène; dans sa propre société, dans un pays développé et dans un contexte postcolonial. Ces récits décrivent le statut, l'individualité et les conditions contextuelles d'un archéologue.

Resumen: El arqueólogo indígena del mundo subdesarrollado es absolutamente el otro en su propio país; dicha condición es resultado de un proceso a largo plazo, el proceso de la revolución post-industrial en los países desarrollados que cambió las acciones y las reacciones universales hacia el país subdesarrollado. Un arqueólogo en el mundo subdesarrollado es el otro porque su disciplina es una disciplina no indígena importada. Su contexto es más problemático y normalmente es partidario de sus pioneros de disciplina occidentales. Como se narrará a continuación, un arqueólogo indígena tiene que censurarse y distanciarse de su contexto nativo, aunque no haya lugar para ellos en el mundo desarrollado ya que naturalmente es otro mundo. Su educación en un país subdesarrollado les ha hecho aplicar métodos y adoptar enfoques que están definidos en su mayor parte por la propaganda y las políticas regionales de los gobiernos basadas en el nacionalismo. Sin embargo, el arqueólogo necesita principios humanísticos antropológicos para ser efectivo a escala mundial. En el presente artículo se han narrado cuatro encuentros sociales con un arqueólogo indígena; en su propia sociedad, en un país desarrollado y en un contexto post-colonial. Estas narraciones describen su estatus, la individualidad y las condiciones contextuales de un arqueólogo.

KEY WORDS

Indigenous archaeologists, Propaganda, Trans-modern society, Traditional society, Encounter

Introduction

... As an Iranian Archaeologist

Archaeology in The Near East has two distinct aspects; first, field archaeology which should take its permissions always from a governmental part,

and second, the educational system of archeology which is usually limited in universities (see Niknami 2000). These aspects have many overlaps, but we cannot consider these aspects as the same. In Iran, archaeology was established by conducting field activities with the aim of perusing, finding antiques and economic objectives (and in rare instances as high class entertainments). Archaeology in Iran is an imported commodity and has not merged with the body of Iranian society (Papoli and Garazhian 2012; see Presidency of Iran 2001).

In 1900–1920s, some archaeological activities in Iran were conducted by ranges of specific classes, like the majority of upper classes and religious minorities (*ibid*). Before this time two different groups with different backgrounds and motivations had experienced the antiquarian activity in Iran: European discoverers, elites and high classes (Moosavi 1990). Such discoveries, mostly conducted by Europeans, led to a kind of local nationalism and Aryan centrism (Amir Arjomand 1984; Marashi 2008). Historically and as a matter of fact in contemporary archaeology, field activities in the Iranian archaeology gradually confined to academic activities and educations at universities.

During long lasted wars with Russian and British armies, the Qajar government (1785–1920) lost its northern and eastern territories (Keddie 1999; SariolGhalam 2012). During the last years of their dynasty, the Qajar governors gave autonomy to the traditional communal groups such as tribes and the *ulama*/the clergy (Moghadam 1996). Adopting of the constitutional laws (Martin 2005) which were confirmed by the Qajar king, *Mozzafar ol din Shah*, and the civil laws passed under the influence of *Shiite* jurisprudence, was a concession to liberal groups (Ghani and Ghani 2001) and a concession to religious traditional groups respectively. In other words, Qajar government gave autonomy to internal groups in order to protect the division of its territories. This converted the Iranian Qajar society to an area of competitions (see Spencer 2002) for internal and external powerful agents. One of the main subjects of these competitions was gaining permissions for discovering antiques.

Upper classes, who had enough power in political structure, would use this power to obtain excavation permits (Ma'soomi 2004) while the Europeans had begun to take part in such competitions in purpose of excavating ancient sites, especially the ones introduced in Bible (Moorey 1991) such as Susa. Some of them (the French, for example) took the right of long term archaeological excavations in Iran as well (See Karimloo 2001). On the other side, the Iranian nationalists and intellectuals began to compel the Qajar government to protect the cultural heritage. Over the late Qajar period, these pressures could not bring about practical conclusions but in early Pahlavi dynasty social and cultural context got prepared and the Antiquity law (*Athighat*) (ICHTO 1997) was ratified by the Parliament.

Reza Shah (reigned 1920–1941—first Pahlavi king) continued to give concessions to foreign countries in the form of archaeological excavation permissions (Gürsan-Salzmann 2007). Reza Shah's government would utilize the archaeological data for a nationalistic propaganda (Cottam 1979). Founding The University of Tehran as well as the Department of Archaeology in this era bespeaks that the roots of the Iranian archaeological educations are still nationalistic (see Negahban 2005).

Mohammad Reza's (reigned 1941–1979), the Son of Reza Shah, Nationalistic approach was formed as an organized structural theory to affect the regional newly-raised powers such as Iraq (Lockard 2010) and Jamal in Egypt. Archeology went under the shadow of history which was serving the Pahlavi monarchy to establish a new Aryanism (see Knight 2012; Richards 2004).

However, the political leadership of Iran believed that architectural and archaeological data attributed to the Iranians could be helpful for representations of nationalist ideas. So Muhammad Reza Pahlavi named himself as the follower of Achaemenid kings (Holliday 2011), especially Cyrus the Great, and changed the formal calendar of Iran from the solar A.H. system to one based on the date of Cyrus's coronation.

Rising Islamic fundamentalists after 1979 revolution, archaeology and history were both on the danger of being eradicated. Two decades after the revolution, the annual students of archaeology were 30 persons, and the only department of archaeology was still at the University of Tehran. Furthermore, regarding the administrative terms, the official structure of archaeology in prerevolutionary (pre-1979) Iran was under the supervision of The Archaeological Center which was controlled by The Ministry of Culture and Art changing to the Organization of Iranian Cultural Heritage in 1980s.

Basically, the first post revolution governments were involved by Iran–Iraq war throughout 1990s. The government of Hashemi Rafsanjani was trying to reestablish the war impairing. In such a condition, the most important problem of archaeology was the destruction of sites during war and the illicit excavations; in this decade (1980–1990) archaeological activities were mostly focused on under danger ones. In 2000s, Khatami's government rose with more cultural views, while that of Ahmedinejad's has a populist view to culture. Khatami's period was actually the bright period of archaeology in which for the first time after 1979 revolution the foreign archaeologists were able to take permit to begin researches in Iran and the specialists found a space to survey, excavate and study the material culture. However, just 4 years later, the Ahmedinejad's government begun to reuse archaeological data in a nationalistic way.

Generally, all post revolution policies for cultural heritage have been affected by the smuggler's excavations. For example, paying attention to Jiroft illegal excavations (2005) led to changing ICHTO structure (2006) in Khatami's government.

The archaeological heritage and archaeologists are both in danger in Iran! The heritages are daily being ruined by development and archaeologists by radical governments who skeptically see them as part of Pahlavi's propaganda. Nonetheless, archaeology has not developed itself because of pressures and has been remained linear and limited only to the past. Archaeologists have not found their position as academicians in Iran, a country where the archaeologists are always being considered as the supporters of nationalism. Studying in such a context, Iranian archaeologists usually have problems encountering the foreign theories of archaeology. This is what I am going to narrate in this article.

...As an Indigenous Archaeologist

Archaeology was first formed in Europe just after the industrial revolution, 19th century (see Trigger 2006:36–37). It is obvious that some of these discipline characteristics have been derived from the industrialism (Silliman 2006; see Thomas 2004). In European societies, archaeology has grown gradually after a European archaeological tradition emerged. It is obvious that archaeology was emerged in a context completely different from the Near eastern ones, it was there needed but not also in other societies such as Iran. This tradition has a distinctive connection with these societies context and gets constantly evaluated there (Hodder 1991). In Near East, archaeology has been mostly imported during 19th century, early 20th century and particularly between the two World Wars but factually it should be noticed that archaeology was imported without its fundamental principles.

Being in a trans-modern society in the Middle East, archaeology has not still a stable position in the Iranian society context. Iranian Archaeology can be discussed from two aspects: as an administrative part of the government and as an academic discipline at universities.

The discipline is also mostly unknown among the public because it has not originated from their region. During some eras, such as Pahlavi II's, which was perceived as secular nationalism (Alishan 1987; Amir Arjomand 1984; Ansari 2003), the nationalistic ethno central approaches could attract the governors but the conflicts between the government and the public caused archaeology and indigenous archaeologists to become more isolated (see Trigger 1995). Most of archaeological activities in a country like Iran have been conducted by foreign archaeologists (Moosavi 1990). For example, even the official affairs were in the hands of the European and the American archaeologists in pre-1979 revolution Iran (Ma'soomi 2004; Negahban 2005). In 1930–1940s, the National Museum and archaeological excavations of western Iran were mostly under the dominance of French archaeologists such as Andre Godard; however a generation later, in 1960–1970s, the academic parts

and professor such as the archaeologists working in the archaeology department of Tehran University were under the impacts for Americans especially in Mohammad Reza's (Pahlavi II) reign (see Niknami 2000). These foreign archaeologists were practicing a self-compliment colonial archaeology with no worries about indigenous matters and premises in a society like Iran mostly because of their international viewpoints and cultural gaps in the indigenous contexts.

An indigenous archaeologist is encountered with a discipline which has no roots in his/her own society while his/her position and job is unknown in the context he/she lives; it is occurring in a context in which many Near Eastern archaeologists have angrily rejected Western concepts and models that relegate their own past to inferior or peripheral status (Vitelli 2006). Furthermore, their position and discipline can be abused by the governors besides the public who may use the discipline outputs as their Nationalistic tools of ethnocentrism. In such a context, where archaeology is as an imported commodity; indigenous archaeologists cannot export their information and study with their own questions in western academies mostly because the western universities have profound differences with the viewpoints they have learned in their own context. She/he is *the other* (Hodder 1996) both in his/her society and in the west.

In the transitional context of Near Eastern societies, the archaeology is encountered with serious opponents and critics. The strongest of them is a kind of radical traditional thought derived from the customs and religion (see Foster 2006; Ridgway Schmidt 2006) which advocates among the majority of people. In traditional contexts of trans-modern world, there is sometimes a paradox with the modern world usually derived from the identical aspects and popular types of political philosophy, a philosophy mostly used as propaganda which made an unresolved problem for the archaeologists and the discipline itself.

In Iran, archaeology is faced with a crisis in its fundamental basis. The author of this article is trying to picture the position of an indigenous archaeologist who is encountered in both western and traditional societies. In the current political situation the Middle East is experiencing, it seems that archaeology can follow new existing philosophy such as an anthropological thought which can impact Nationalistic radical approaches and grow more engaged specialists.

First Encounter: Noor Abad-e Delfan, Khaveh, Central Zagros, Iran

It was toward the end of 1999, when a team including two archaeologists, a topographer and a driver began the preliminary visits of the archaeological

sites. Their main aim was to survey the sites of Delfan Township in Central Zagros. The *Land Rover*, our field Automobile, passed over the Khaveh River basin and stopped near a tall shrub and adjacent to wheat farms. Three of them got out of the car. In a native's sight, they were clearly strangers. The observer was a 15 year-old boy. At first glance, it was not his ethnicity (Lur) or his sex (male) that was significant, but it was his humanity. Was it the same for him? Did he view the archaeologists in the same manner?

–“Hi! Hi! How are you?”

He did not respond.

–“What are you doing?”

–“I'm harvesting the wheat.”

–“How interesting!”

He then continued talking rapidly in Luri (a local Farsi accent spoken in western Iran) and in an impolite manner:

–“Sissy city boys! They can't understand these kinds of things! What do they know about hard work?! They eat and sleep as they please; living in luxury; sissies...!”

He went on mumbling and grumbling. It was clear that all of this was addressed to us, the archaeologists, but I pretended I did not understand Luri. I continued with a new question:

–“What a beautiful Luri accent! Are you Lur?”

–“Yes, I am a Lur; a Mountain Lur... a brave Lur, a manly Lur; and Lur means courage and resilience; it means the conqueror of mountains and fields; it means pride, it means superiority and fortitude. Lur is the original race. We prefer to live in the mountains and don't like to live in the city; spoiled; sissies!” He again went on moaning.

–“How many grades have you studied in school? How many years?” I asked.

–“Two years; until second grade; I didn't like studying. What is the use of reading and writing? Nothing! I stopped going to school; reading and writing is good for spoiled city boys.” He continued.

I no longer pretended and just finished the conversation. My colleague, Jalal Adeli, an archaeologist and the team's assistant lost his patience and came forward, glaring at the teenage boy. The two of us walked toward a nearby prehistoric site chatting as we went. Talking about the boy, Jalal tried to change my judgment about the encounter:

–“he was not normal, he was angry and was speaking nonsense; he was bad-tempered; he was unbalanced. I had met him once before when I came here to visit the site...” He then pointed to the site and kept talking. (The conversation about the historic site will be discussed in the following paragraphs). My mind was full of questions about the boy: He was being proud of himself, honoring himself, while condemning and humiliating everyone other than himself and his culture. Like a silk worm he was spinning a

thread-like case around himself, yet he was ready to attack everything and everyone. He was ready to sacrifice everything just for honoring his ethnicity. For him, these would be considered as courage and bravery. Indeed his mindset was truly contrary to the existing social realities, not on a global, but on a national scale. How does his mindset help him coexist with other ethnic groups such as Laks (an ethnic group scattered in western Iran, Ilam and Luristan provinces), Kurds, and other Lurs? What about Turks? What would happen to him if he lived in a city such as Khorramabad (the center of Luristan province, a city located in western Iran)? Would he become an ethnocenterist? If not, he would definitely be a chauvinist!

Generally, could his ethnocentric ideas be classified in the same category as “racism?” From where do these ideas originate? What role will this kind of ideas play in his future? One cannot classify them simply as “local nationalism.” Is he, as my assistant believed, simply an abnormal person? Or is he a representative of a belief deeply rooted in the regional attitude? Then, could it be considered as a regional and cultural catastrophe and one the future anticipations? Even if this is a single attitude, it is a catastrophe, let alone the manifestation of a whole population.

Our team’s assessment for surveying the site continued. We surveyed a high mound site near a river. A large hole was dug in the middle of the site by looters. A plethora of a variety of Chalcolithic and Bronze Age potsherds were scattered on a steep slope. The other day, we went back to make a topographic map of the site and to take more photos. Two children from a nearby village, who helped us with the process of mapping the topography, talked about the rumors that many decades ago some archaeologists had excavated the site. The story told that many years earlier some foreigners had come over and excavated the site with the assistance of local villagers. One night, after dismissing the village laborers, they had gone to the site and stolen precious pieces of a black stone. They never returned to the area afterwards.

Later, when we were shifting gears and begging to survey the area around the river, we found another prehistoric site. We asked a middle-aged man about the name of the site. He said that the site was called Abdulhosseini and had been excavated by American archaeologists. He even remembered the name of an archaeologist couple.

Just after the survey, we searched in the published literature and discovered that the first site was called “Tepe Jamshidi,” excavated by G. Contenau in 1935 (Contenau and Ghirshman 1935). A short description was published at the end of the report on Tepe Giyan and a brief summary of Tepe Jamshidi’s topography was also included. The second site, “Tepe Abdulhosseini,” one of the Neolithic settlements of the Zagros, was excavated by Judith Pullar.

Its extensive report was published in 1990 (Pullar 1990). If we are lucky, the third generation of local stories of archaeologists visiting the region will be about us: the spoiled city boys; the sissies.

Even though I looked for him, I never met that teenage boy again. But let us imagine that he had access to the mentioned expert reports by Contentau and Pullar of these two sites. What would he do with the data based on his ethnocentric ideology? I guess he would use the data to strengthen his preexisting ideas. If he had the data, he would independently reduce the archaeological data to a racist-chauvinist interpretation, introducing his region as the archaeological most important area in the world, where the first settled villages (Tepe Abdulhossein) and the first cities (Tepe Jamshidi) formed. Our new, local, and non-academic archaeologist might not have read Gordon Childe's *Society and Knowledge* in which he emphasized that the *firsts* in Prehistory are not accessible. He can only interview with the media to guaranty the continuation of the project and to attract the attention of local authorities.

Second Encounter: Gar de l'Est, Paris, City Hall

It is the spring of 2007. My wife, Leila Papoli Yazdi, and I arrived in Paris yesterday, and on the same day we found a kindergarten for our 3-year-old son in the neighborhood. The next morning, we are going there to ask for more information. We are told that a number of forms must be filled out at the City Hall before his registration and admission. Our son and we, walk to the city hall. After a lot of searching and asking around, we finally find the relevant office. A very serious blond lady is in charge of the office. The problem is that we are not fluent in French, and she refuses to speak English. The fact she refuses to speak in any other languages except her own surprises us, considering the fact that we are dealing with a very respectable lady. I ask my wife who speaks French more fluently:

–“What did she say?”

–“She says ‘go and find a translator if you can’t speak French. I’m not willing to speak English.’”

–“Is she serious?!”

–“Don’t worry darling; don’t be so shocked, it’s just a problem that we have to solve.”

I speak English and she responds in French; and I continue speaking in English and she continues to respond in French. It is obvious that she understands English very well, but refuses to speak it, or prefers doing so. I ask my wife for help, and she continues to translate for me:

–“Tell her we’re not native English speakers, we just speak it because it’s an international language. Tell her we are Iranian.”

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My wife's broken French does not solve the problem, and the lady continues to speak French.

I tell my wife: "What is this?! She's not even racist but a 'language-ist!!!"

An Afro-European lady, another employee of that office, having noticed something is wrong, walks toward us and asks *in English* what the problem is. My wife and I suddenly start speaking simultaneously. She finally understands our problem and helps us fill out the appropriate forms.

She then tells us what additional documents are required: "You need your son's immunization form. Please have it translated and then attach it to this form." I cannot help describing the first white lady as a fanatical nationalist, a chauvinist who takes pride in what is, in her view, the superiority of the French language.

We leave the City Hall. I immediately send an email to my brother in Tehran and ask him to translate my son's immunization documents, scan and email a copy of it as soon as possible. I then take a walk on the streets of Paris. I am wondering if she, that white lady, could be considered as a racist. I ask my wife this question and she mentions the well-known stereotype of French nationalists, "and their refusal to speak English might be rooted in the long and bitter history of Franco-British relations" she suggests.

Upon the arrival of the scanned copy of the immunization forms, my wife goes back to the municipality City Hall. This time she goes directly to the Afro-European lady. The application is now completed, but we have to wait until the beginning of the next school year in September, the month in which we will be going back to Iran.

Unfortunately, the image that forms in my mind—an academic mind, from white western European Caucasian people, is that of the white lady at the City Hall; a lady who, despite her understanding it, refuses to speak English; the lady who refuses to acknowledge the fact that it was not our fault, or our son's fault that we were not born in a French-speaking country, that in the Iranian school system, only English is taught as second language.

Is it accurate to say that the lady is a racist? If not, it is fair to say she does not have much of an open mind. I am only analyzing her as an individual. It could have been the case that such a treatment was part of a greater, governmental policy. If that is the case, which I doubt it is, then a local governmental institution—one in charge of resolving trivial daily bureaucratic problems—in a Western European capital, a cradle of freedoms and modernity, has become the means of implementing institutionalized racism. And if not racist, then one can call it a biased linguistic policy, one according to which the speakers of one language are ranked

more superior to the others, and one which therefore can only serve racist agendas.

Third Encounter: Peshawar, En Route from the Airport to the Peshawar University

It's winter of 2007. In less than 2 weeks we will be leaving Tehran for Peshawar, Pakistan.

Iranians know very little about this eastern neighbor: diet and subsistence, various lifestyles, health, and security issues; therefore, our attempts to find an Iranian, in Iran, who has lived in Pakistan, were unsuccessful. There is even no information in Iran regarding domestic flights in Pakistan. The only information we could find was on the web.

There are now 2 days left before our departure for Lahore. I meet an Italian archaeologist who has years of experience working in Pakistan. We meet in the lobby of the Ferdowsi Grand Hotel in downtown Tehran. I tell him about our family's upcoming trip and ask him about Peshawar. He tells me: "You need to be careful. It might be best not to take your family with you to Pakistan." I ask about the reason. He explains that Pakistan is so unsafe at the moment that one might get shot just walking down a street! And finally, when facing my insistence to take my family, he advises us at least not to leave the Peshawar University campus.

After leaving the meeting I feel a little down, so down in fact, as if I was almost hit by a car. I am deep in thought and feel quite disoriented. The driver shouts: "What's the matter with you? If you want to kill yourself that's fine, just don't get *me* involved!" I come back to reality. I say to myself, "Why am I judging a country I've never been too? Don't jump on conclusion!" On the other hand: "A reputable archaeologist who's worked in Pakistan for as long as I've been alive does not lie! He's always been kind and honest with me."

I finally return home and try to pretend like nothing has happened. But my wife notices that something is not quite alright, that I don't have concentration. She becomes curious. I finally decide to tell her what makes my mind so busy. We discuss the issue in the short amount of time we have, and finally decide to move forward with our plan, and to just be careful!

Lahore Airport

It's around two o'clock in the afternoon. Our flight landed in Peshawar a few minutes ago. The information signs and panels inside the airport are in both Urdu and English.

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We find it surprising that we could read and understand most of the Urdu signs. We go to the domestic flights information desk and we find out that there were still tickets available for the Lahore–Peshawar flight which will take off in less than an hour. We are excited, but still a little bit worried. From the Lahore airport I call Peshawar University to make sure that a driver will still meet us at the Peshawar airport.

Sunset at the Airport

The sun is still shining when we arrive in Peshawar's small airport. The Hajis are returning from Mecca and everywhere is decorated with colorful ornamentations.

As we wait for our baggage, I spot, among the crowd in the arrival lobby a tall man holding a sign with our names on it. With his beard, traditional clothing, and Azadi hat, he had all the semblance of a Taliban fighter. I am a little bit startled. My sense of responsibility for my family's safety certainly did not help the situation. We had chosen to come, so we have to go ahead. I walk toward him and by pointing at the sign in his hand; I let him know that we are his passengers. He first looks at us and then suddenly disappears only to come back again with a cart. He puts the bags in the cart and then picks up our son and puts him down on top of the luggage. He is very kind and polite. We follow him. He speaks fast Urdu, and a little English, but communicate mainly by gesture. We communicate by the common language of human being, a common sense of understanding. Once I see "The University of Peshawar" on the car, I calm down.

While driving on the streets of the city, I notice that the cars and people's clothing all denote the conservative image of a traditional city, somewhere between India and Afghanistan. This is of course, Pakistan. The driver drives through the gates of the large and lush property of the university with old, large trees and stops in front of a one-story building. The driver takes our luggage into a room as our English translator informs us about dinnertime, and the know-how of using the TV, and then shows us the kitchen and introduces us to the cook. He says that we may ask the cook to prepare any special dishes we may desire. I am looking out of our room's window when a tall, elderly man, with a long, white beard, wearing traditional clothes and an Azadi hat walks in. He introduces himself as the head of the department of archaeology and invites us to visit the department in the morning.

There remains another problem, similar to one we had in France: what should we do about our son's kindergarten? Our translator tells us that there is a kindergarten on campus and is run under supervision of the

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Faculty of domestic Economics. But it is closed at the moment and we must wait until tomorrow morning.

My wife takes our son to the kindergarten early next morning, and comes back along. She had paid the money and they had admitted our son. We then proceed to the archaeology department, where we are faced with the kind greetings of the department head. In one day, we have managed to sign our son up at a kindergarten, visit the department, and arrange for the analysis of the artifacts at the university museum.

Fifteen Days Later

For the past couple of weeks, we did not leave the campus, having listened to our Italian colleague's advice. By now, we feel at home. I have started going to town constantly, using the famous tricycle taxis, a symbol of the traditional lifestyle of East Asian and Indian cities. All of the drivers—whether rich or poor, in traditional garments or in more western style of clothing—treated us kindly. When they would find out that we were from Iran, they would call us *mihman* (= guests) and would refuse to accept the fare. We found it interesting that this behavior was common among all of the taxi drivers with whom we interacted.

I am now somewhat confused: the information my Italian colleague gave me had now lost all its validity. But why was his experience so different from ours? At a conference in Peshawar, I meet an American archaeologist who is dressed in the traditional local clothing. I ask him about this, and he is also worried about the security conditions. Why is there such a difference between the experience of our European and American colleagues and that of ours?

One Month Later

We have, by now visited several other cities in Pakistan. Speaking to people, I had come to conclude that the different treatment was a result of centuries of Western colonial rule. They are distrustful of the Europeans as they are considered harbingers of troubles ahead. Now I understand that my colleague and I were both right. It seems that there is no racism at work here, but instead, one must speak of realities of a postcolonial society: a complex situation in which people, traditionally overlook central governments as colonial entities and then they themselves become the active reactionary agents. And so, after a month, I now realized that for them, foreigners are considered colonialists, and colonialists are white Europeans and Americans. They did not consider us as foreigners, but guests; guests who speak Persian, a language which is the sign of higher social class in Peshawar. In fact, there are great differences between

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postcolonial societies and those which have always been ruled directly by colonists.

Indeed, societies have very strong, long-term group memories, as if they are living their bygone modern history, a history pretty visible in the behaviors and daily interactions of people. I can now understand the kindness extended to us by the university and taxi drivers. But I can also understand the view extended by my Italian colleague, and the local clothing worn by the American archaeologist, which acted much as a bullet-proof vest. But we were guests, not foreigners, we were considered as one of their own unless proved otherwise. I only wish that the French lady were here to see the consequences of her attitude and the attitude of others like her for Europeans and Americans traveling to this part of the world.

Fourth Encounter: Faculty of Art and Architecture, Bu Ali Sina University, Hamedan, Iran

End of Spring 2008

It has been more than 1 month since I received my PhD in prehistoric archaeology. Per my contract with the Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Innovation, I had to teach at Bu Ali Sina University as a part-time lecturer. My wife who was also my classmate is in a similar situation, except it has now been four months since she defended her dissertation, tolerating the boredom of staying at home, desiring to begin teaching. Our attempts to find faculty positions at a university in Tehran are to no avail, and so we are forced to accept our assignment in Hamedan. In the small ring of archaeologists in Iran, everyone has now heard about our attempts to find positions in Tehran, and so the Dean of the School of Art and Architecture at Bu Ali Sina tries to convince us to accept our assignments there. I am still not quite sure whether I should accept the position. I know that we cannot begin our work in the middle of the semester, and we have to wait until the end of the term.

Having no other options, we make our way to Hamedan. It has now been 3 years that I have been working at Bu Ali Sina University as contract lecturer (2005–2008), and now I will move there permanently as I will permanently join the faculty at Bu Ali Sina.

December 2009

It is now 6 months since we have been at Bu Ali Sina University. After months of assessing its potentials, I proposed the organization of

a symposium on the subject of the potentials and possibilities of changes in the archaeological education system and syllabuses.

The school and the Dean's office accepted the proposal. In the spring of 2009 the university and the President's office also approved of organizing the symposium. It is decided that the symposium should be held in the summer of 2009. Two months before the symposium and on very short notice, I receive a letter from the President's office, appointing me as its executive director. At a meeting, I express my dissatisfaction with my appointment, but it was to no avail.

The Head of the Archaeology Department at Bu Ali Sina has also been appointed as the Research and Science Director of the symposium; an individual with too little knowledge on its issues and goals. We hold several meetings in the department, during which I have defended every single part of the proposal and shared the results of my assessments with my colleagues.

Different segments and sessions have been suggested and we decide to postpone the date to the fall of 2009. The call for abstracts yields few impressive results. I therefore ask students and colleagues to submit papers. According to the proposal, I also organize different workshops for archaeology pioneers and professors across the country; workshops based on different time periods: prehistoric, historic, and Islamic, and also a theory and methods workshop.

November 2009

The symposium was held. On a national scale, it was a success for a small city like Hamedan. Seventy-two students participated in the administrative and executive parts of the conferences. There was however, one problem: my local colleagues left little to no authority for me, the Executive Director. The school appointed one of the locals to the position of Financial Director and gave him total authority over matters. While the students and I were trying to move forward one step at a time, I very much felt and saw the "underground" activities intended to undermine and sabotage the operations. The symposium very easily ignored the students' role in arranging affairs as well as our good executive organization.

The scientific and general sessions were planned to take place in the course of 2 days. The third day was intended to be for general discussions and conclusions regarding the national archaeology curriculum. The person, who behind the scenes, considered himself to be the only person in charge, undermined the entire operation and did everything except for his own job.

His responsibility was overseeing the organization and establishment of an archaeological association. Because of his incompetence, we cut his

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work out of the program. We then organized and conducted all of our communications and agreements with different participatory bodies. If this symposium was to happen, I thought, it would have a truly unprecedented impact on Iranian archaeology. And it was so: for example, creations of 10 new Master's degrees were proposed and approved (Garazhian 2010).

By the second day of the 3-day event, the lack of scientific rigor was obvious in the Islamic sessions, their discussions, and their proposals for the national curriculum; was so unsuccessful that by the afternoon of the second day students were clearly protesting and openly criticizing its content. The local underground systems became active again. Later on, it was reported to me that the chair of the students' affairs committee, who was a fellow faculty member at Bu Ali Sina as well, was threatened and insulted in public.

Now I can assess what happened during the organization of the symposium with what I had heard many times before: the university administration is primarily in the hand of native, local ethnic groups who run the university like a family business. Even some of the departments have no non-native faculty members and staff. Is not this an institutionalized racism which has replaced the scientific rigor and criteria? Local, ethnic, and governmentally-run networks have taken over all positions and responsibilities here. Within this context, I had submitted a proposal that was scientifically rigorous and clear in its goals and impacts. These networks appointed me as the Executive Director of the symposium without informing me in advance. These same networks placed their own people in such positions like the Financial Director. (It is interesting that I even did not meet with the university President as I assumed there was no need for sycophancy and flattery in an academic setting.) Of course as the Executive Director I was to be held responsible for the symposium, though with practically no executive authority.

The students were threatened to be expelled from the university, primarily because they expressed their unfavorable opinions, ideas, and assessments about the quality of work in their own committee. The chair of the students' committee was also threatened. The person, who chaired the least scientifically rigorous session and, to him accepting criticism and listening to the protests was of the least importance, was also originally appointed as the Research and Science Director of the symposium. Based on what merit-based criteria was this individual appointed to this position? Three months after the conference, this individual was awarded an appreciation plaque and a gold coin for holding the conference. Interestingly, I, who wrote and submitted the proposal, was not invited and was in fact completely ignored by the local mafia.

Is this not a clear case of ethnocentrism? Let us not forget that I am writing about an academic setting, a university, ranked in the top 10

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schools in the country, not the natives of the Kalahari or the Indian tribes of the Amazon! I am writing about individuals who consider themselves professionals in the realm of the humanities, individuals who control the power in the system, a system which ought to be based upon modern science, a system with more than 70 years of experience.

Many Months Later

On a cold and overcast afternoon I received a call from the office of the Vice Chancellor of Bu Ali Sina informing me of a meeting between the Vice Chancellor and me. His secretary does not explain what this meeting is going to be about. I go there on time. I assumed he wants to thank me for my work and efforts regarding the symposium: the first gathering of this type, regarding the reformation of the national archaeology curriculum. I am, for sure, just imagining things. The meeting is more like an interrogation. The Vice Chancellor asks me why I have collected money for the excavation methods courses, while I have not participated in them. Why I have not returned the money, why I have not submitted the students' grades on time. I am just shocked and surprised. I just stare at him. My mouth has gone dry, and I drink some water. He is looking at a letter from which he is asking these questions, but he does not want me to see the letter. I am guessing that the letter has been written by some of my colleagues in the department. I decide to be frank and honest. I explain to him that now it is for a number of years that students register for these courses because of my name and reputation, but they are my local, native colleagues who have been actually in charge of them and so take the money that is supposed to be deposited into my account. I explain to him that my intention with teaching at a university is not to make money or take other people's money. I tell him that some of the faculty members, without my say-so or without consulting with me, just take over courses that are under my name and just submit grades accordingly. I then throw him a look of disgust and leave his office.

At the end of the year, my salary is cut, as are my courses. There is no written law or code of conduct to justify this behavior. Here, the rule is the rule of the jungle! I have no choice but to leave. I leave Hamedan because I can no longer tolerate ethnocentrism, the elaborate underground network that supports it. I do not support threatening students with expulsion. I recall one of my non-native students used to tell me: "sometimes I feel like I'm not a human anymore." I asked her why she feels that way. She responded that every time she goes to the office one of her professors, he does not even say "hello" to her, as if she is not even there. I try to justify his behavior: "maybe he doesn't hear you come in." But she tells me that this is a habit of his: "whenever I go there with one of my friends

who is also a native, he gets up in courtesy and asks how she and her family are doing, and they keep talking back and forth in their own dialect.” I now understand better. I tell her that this is not her problem, but it is my colleague who in his mind puts students into two categories of native and non-native: ones with whom he communicates and ones that he simply ignores. Ethnocentrism is perhaps a local or a native form of racism and nationalism. The worldview of such individuals is limited to their own region; they fail to see humans and to see them in a humane manner. My student has two options: she can stay and bear the situation, or she can also leave. When I told her this, my emphasis on the word “also” confused her: “Are you saying that you’re leaving?” I answer that there is no other alternative. After a while, my student and I both left Hamedan.

Discussion

The modern versions of racism and nationalism have roots in Western cultures (Bobock 2008; Boggs and Boggs 2001), and the seeds of them were nurtured and spread around the world (see Bush 2009) by the expansion of colonialism. These were the roots which supported two World Wars, colonized India, raped Africa (Ginio 2009), and plundered Asia. These were the roots which redrew borders of tens of new countries out of the Ottoman Empire (Shaw and Shaw 1977), the *modus operandi* of which was “divide and rule.” These are the roots the plants of which are still yielding fruits.

The Lur boy as if he was defending his dialect and ethnicity as if he were defending a family member against a vicious army. Indeed, where was he trained or brainwashed? In which traditional social setting was he taught to stand up against seemingly well-off city dwellers? Who has brainwashed him to think that welfare and comfort, both seemingly belonging to the urban lifestyle, are undesirable? Is it the “traditional” structure of rural life ways that has trained his mind to stand up to the modern lifestyles and modernity? The influence of Western modern, nationalistic thoughts in Third-World countries still causes damage. Can we be happy with the fact that the Lur boy knows nothing about the modern science of archaeology? If he knew archaeology, what would be the implications of such knowledge for his life, his culture; and his nation? The only common interpretations of archaeological data in Iran have roots in nationalism and chauvinism. I guess if the boy had even a brief knowledge of prehistoric sites in the Zagros (eg. Abdolhosseini and Jamshidi), he would utilize that knowledge to create an epic and majestic history of his own people, and therefore, to strengthen his own ethnocentric worldview. But what should be done? In the social fabric of Near Eastern countries, what other purpose

can archaeology serve but to build and strengthen a sense of national identity and unity?

The attitude of the French lady in the municipality City Hall in Paris could not be understood in the context of the history of Western and European ethnocentric policies. Can we understand her behavior in the context of white supremacy? It is safe to say that her pride in her language is, in her mind, a criteria for categorizing other people, just like my Iranian colleagues in Hamedan. Indeed why should I, as an academic, and my family, as members of the global community, be condemned to such treatment based on cultural and linguistic criteria on the selection of which we had no influence? Does she, the French lady, know that it has been such behaviors like hers, albeit in the more systematic context of by-gone colonial policies, which have resulted in such reactionary attitudes as we observed in Pakistan? I am, of course, referring to my Italian colleague's perspective of the state of affairs in Pakistan: "Be careful there! You might get shot in the streets!"

People's attitude, in general, in post-colonial countries is not at all positive toward people from former colonial powers. It is within this social context that Taliban is able to gather a strong support base. Military action against Taliban is similar to the French lady's attitude towards us: both of them lead to reactionary attitudes in post-colonial countries; increase animosities, increase distances, and strengthen borders in a world where globalization should be tearing down walls and borders. A bullet is answered with another bullet; humiliation with discrimination.

The behavior of my colleagues in Hamedan stands in accordance with that of the French lady. The underground networks by which they are elected and appointed to their positions are a softened type of reaction of development and modern lifestyles; less severe than the radical fundamentalists.

Their academic criteria are no scientific or merit-based, but one driven by an ethnocentric worldview. As a result, local natives are in the administrative positions of authority at Bu Ali Sina University. But do they know that such a behavior only brings about their isolation and will decrease the prestige of their institute of higher education in national rankings and surveys?

Why did my colleagues, when in competition, put aside all ethical frameworks? Is not their behavior and participation in underground networks a reaction against modern life ways and its manifestation in the very establishment that is a university? It seems to be the case that in many developing countries, while modern universities are well established, their maintenance has been left to agents whose behavior is incompatible with the scientific and research goals of these modern institutions.

With the advent of Internet and using it at an unprecedented rate, is not it high time taken up a more humane and culturally sensitive approach in our attempts to resolve cultural issues around the world? It is now time to educate that Lur boy that preceding to anything, more important than his ethnicity, he is at first a human being, and humans are the same around the world; no matter if they are city dwellers or nomadic pastoralists. It is time the French lady to start communicating in a kinder manner with foreigners who need her information. It is a cultural and biological fact that human beings have to communicate, and we communicate in different languages, and so I speak Persian, and she speaks French, and yet an international language is integral to globalization.

It is time for my colleagues at Peshawar University, in a city which is now a Taliban stronghold, to know that they should teach their people to put all white people from Western countries into the category of “colonizers.” It is time for my former colleagues in Hamadan to give up the notion that their corner of the world no longer belong just to them, and to embrace scientific and merit-based criteria in their academic circle. They make wake up every morning and look at themselves in mirrors. But it is now time for them to wake up from a different kind of sleep and to take a good and long look at their behaviors in the dynamic mirror of humanity.

Past and its material culture are mute and meaninglessness. It is us, as archaeologists, who may give meaning to them in an ethnocentric or Nationalistic way. Spreading these kinds of meaning to the societies, the past may be used as a weapon to hurt humanity and this is us, the archaeologists, who should think exactly on our explanations and interpretations in purpose of preventing such ways of looking to the past.

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